

Foxconn to start making face masks alongside iPhones in China

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The number of confirmed novel coronavirus infections in Mainland China has now surpassed 31,000 cases

Foxconn will start manufacturing surgical face masks alongside Apple products at its Shenzhen factory, the world's biggest contract electronics maker announced Thursday in response to the deadly novel coronavirus outbreak.

"Face masks are now the standard equipment in our fight against the epidemic," said Foxconn's 1200 word statement on its official WeChat social media site.

"Every second counts in this battle, the sooner we can ensure a supply of these goods, the sooner we can stop the epidemic, save lives and get through these difficult times."

Also known by its official name Hon Hai Precision Industry, Foxconn assembles Apple's iPhones as well as gadgets for other international brands.

The company's vast network of factories in China are set to resume operations on February 10 after an extended Lunar New Year holiday caused by the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan which has

since reached than 20 countries.

"We have succeeded in the test production and are applying for certification. We anticipate being able to produce 20 million masks by the end of February," according to the Foxconn statement.

The spread of the disease has already prompted China's [foreign ministry](#) to appeal to the [international community](#) for donations in [medical supplies](#)—including surgical face [masks](#), protective clothing and safety goggles.

The number of confirmed infections in Mainland China has now surpassed 31,000 cases and resulted in more than 636 deaths.

The virus is also set to have an impact on international supply chains and manufacturing given China's lynchpin role in the global economy.

Foxconn now projects a sales increase of one to three percent this year, down from a January forecast of three to five percent, chairman Young Liu told Bloomberg News.

The company has tried to allay fears of production shortfalls, saying it had previous experience of viral outbreaks during the SARS epidemic in 2003.

Once full production of [face masks](#) is reached, "not only can we satisfy our own employees epidemic prevention needs, we can also provide for people outside the company," says Foxconn.

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